

Bylaw Review Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 16, 2018
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

The first meeting of Amherst's Bylaws Review Committee was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Members present: Bernard Kubiak, Kay Moran, and Robert Ritchie.

Others present: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Economic Development Director Geoffrey Kravitz, and former Charter Commission Vice-Chair Mandi Jo Hanneke.

Introductions and Committee Organization:

Ritchie was elected chair by a vote of 2-0, 1 abstention. Kubiak and Moran will share clerk duties. Kravitz is staff liaison. As the first committee established under the Charter approved by voters on May 27, 2018, we are governed by procedures established in Section 9.12, including setting aside a time for public comment at every meeting. Ritchie suggests following Roberts Rules of Order during meetings. Whoever takes minutes should send them upon completion to Kravitz, who will distribute them to the other committee members for review at the next meeting. Bockelman said we can consult Lauren Goldberg, managing partner of Town Attorney KP Law, PC, as needed but should check with him first.

Purpose and Scope of Work:

Hanneke said the Commission's intention for this committee was 1) to update town bylaws to change references to Town Meeting and/or the Select Board to the Council and/or Manager, as appropriate, and 2) to review whether all the bylaws are still relevant. Ritchie, who has considerable experience helping other communities review and revise their bylaws, said bylaws referring to sections of state law should also be checked. Reorganizing the bylaws might be possible later, perhaps with a consultant's help, after enough work has been done to make them functionally accurate for the new form of government. Hanneke added that the Charter uses the term "bylaws," rather than "ordinances," to keep the language consistent with what we've been used to as a town.

Discussion of Work Plan:

After the Town Clerk brings the on-line version of the Bylaws up to date with changes made over the past year, Kravitz will go through it to highlight terms at issue, such as Select Board, Town Meeting, Finance, JCPC, and licenses, and send each committee member a working copy.

Schedule for Meetings:

Meetings were set for 9:30 a.m. on May 22, May 29, June 19, June 26, and July 10 in Town Hall. Kravitz will secure a meeting space and post meeting notices and agendas. For the next meeting we will try to finalize rules of procedure, including remote participation and public comment, continue discussing our work plan, and start reviewing the bylaws.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Documents Used at the Meeting:

The Select Board's Charge to the Bylaw Review Committee, adopted April 23 and revised May 2, 2018

Amherst Home Rule Charter, adopted by voters on March 27, 2018